2023 SCICU Student/Faculty Undergraduate Research Program Application FAQ

1. **What is SCICU?**
   South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities is a non-profit corporation whose mission is to strengthen South Carolina's independent colleges and universities through collaboration, governmental advocacy, fundraising, and public engagement so that every student may choose, afford, and earn an independent college education that fits their personal values, professional and social aspirations, and approach to learning. The 21 member institutions are: Allen University, Anderson University, Benedict College, Bob Jones University, Charleston Southern University, Claflin University, Coker University, Columbia College, Columbia International University, Converse University, Erskine College, Furman University, Limestone University, Morris College, Newberry College, North Greenville University, Presbyterian College, Southern Wesleyan University, Spartanburg Methodist College, Voorhees University, and Wofford College.

2. **What is the SCICU Student/Faculty Undergraduate Research Program?**
   A grant funding opportunity for undergraduate students who attend an SCICU member institution. The program is announced each year in November to engage students in professionally guided primary research, which will develop critical thinking, inquiry, and communication skills. Students who are full-time undergraduates and will not graduate prior to February of 2024 are eligible for funding.

3. **Which disciplines are funded?**
   Proposals from all disciplines that are represented by the member institutions are eligible to be evaluated for potential funding.

4. **Does SCICU fund proposals for the production of artwork, books, machines, etc.?**
   No. SCICU funds only research projects. However, if the project produces research that lays the groundwork for a creative project, then the proposal may be considered for funding.

5. **Does SCICU fund costs for participants?**
   Yes. Participants are paid $5 per 30 minutes of participation in research. The maximum compensation per participant is $50. Projects can request a maximum of $1,000 in participant costs. When appropriate, the use of gift cards is encouraged.

6. **How is the student stipend calculated?**
   SCICU does not pay a flat stipend to the researchers. In the budget section, justification should be detailed as to the time the student will spend on each part of their project. The current pay rate is $10/hour with a cap of $4,000 per student.

7. **Does SCICU fund equipment?**
   SCICU's funds are limited, therefore, SCICU does not fund large equipment purchases. Small equipment such as hot plates, microscope lenses, pH meters, etc. may be considered for funding. Any equipment acquired for a student research project becomes property of the SCICU member institution.

8. **Does SCICU fund computers/tablets/smart phones?**
   No, SCICU does not fund computers, tablets, or smartphones.

9. **What is the process for proposal evaluation?**
   Research evaluation is done by an inter-institutional panel formed of research-active professors from SCICU member institutions. The panel has several core members, however, composition changes based on the disciplines of the proposals received for each funding cycle. Each panel member reviews 8-10 proposals in their discipline per funding cycle. Proposals are ranked based on research merit, educational benefit, appropriateness of the proposed method or approach, capability of the student applicant and/or faculty sponsor to conduct the proposed activity, and the appropriateness of the budget.

10. **Does SCICU give priority to any member institution?**
    No. The panel evaluates all proposals based on the aforementioned criteria.

11. **Do faculty sponsors receive stipends from SCICU?**
    No. SCICU only supports the student and the research expenses. Some member institutions pay a stipend for mentoring students in research. Contact your institution for details.

12. **Does SCICU require IRB and IACUC letters for research that involves human and animal subjects?**
    Yes, starting in 2023 SCICU requires copies of IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval for all research projects that use human participants and IACUC approval for research projects that use animal subjects.

13. **What is the policy for research projects that are conducted in laboratories outside of a member institution?**
    A collaboration letter from an outside organization (archives, labs, schools, etc.) is required along with a detailed plan that includes the research locations should be submitted. SCICU funds research that takes place at SCICU member institutions. If needed, visiting archives or research facilities for parts of a project at a different institution will be allowed. Projects solely taking place at research locations outside of the member institutions are not funded. For questions/further information contact brenda@scicu.org.

14. **Am I required to submit any progress reports?**
    Yes. Faculty sponsors are required to submit 2 progress reports. These reports should be only a few sentences long to indicate if the student(s) is on track for the timely completion of the project. Reports are due to the Chief Academic Officer on June 30 and September 1. Chief Academic Officers are asked to forward the progress reports to brenda@scicu.org.

15. **Are funded students and their faculty sponsors required to attend the symposium?**
    SCICU expects both the faculty sponsor and funded students to attend the entire Symposium. Colleges should plan to excuse students from classes during the Symposium. Faculty/student teams who do not attend the entire Symposium without a compelling excused absence may lose funding eligibility for one funding cycle. The Symposium schedule will be made available prior to the day of the event to encourage early arrival.